

THE HAWAIIAN STAR

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THURSDAY, MAY 3, 1894.

A QUIET ELECTION.

Hawaii is a very orderly country. Even our revolutions are conducted in an unobtrusive manner, and it is rarely that any person suffers in person or property. But the quiet of yesterday's polling was phenomenal. No stranger could have supposed that an election was in progress. Nobody was drunk. No one was shouting. No drums were beating. No cars decorated with flags were flying around with voters. Nothing suggested unusual proceedings, except one set of colored handbills exhorting the party to cast one and one-fifth of a vote for each of five men.

In fact only one party took part in the election, although there were minor subdivisions in that party. In the great division of the country between Republicans and Royalists the latter stood aloof, and the Republicans chose their own delegates without hindrance. A number of gentlemen, with no special effort, find themselves booked for one or more months' work in making a Constitution, although none of those chosen from Oahu have enjoyed any previous legislative experience. These will meet, however, a larger number from the other islands, who do not lack such experience. There can be little doubt that if the Oahu nomination had been properly made by a secret nominating convention, instead of by the haphazard methods of the primaries, the average ability of the Oahu delegates would have graded much higher. On so important an occasion as the making of a Constitution, Oahu should have been conspicuously well represented, and by its strongest and best men. Still we may hope that the few we have chosen may contribute usefully to good work in the coming convention.

On the whole, the country is to be congratulated upon the very orderly and peaceable manner in which this really most important election has been conducted. It is a marked token of the well-conducted character of our people of all classes. It augurs happily for future proceedings in the adjustment of our Government. Our people are characterized by moderation and conservativeness. They tend to choose safe courses. We have sometimes thought they went too far in this direction. Perhaps they ought to hustle about more and shake things up. A little too much, perhaps, of the slow and sure in Honolulu. But we can all feel safe that our new-constitution makers are not going to be the men to initiate violent innovations or start off on rash changes. It will evidently be their aim to place affairs on a safe basis in a careful and prudent way. As few of the old connections of the wires will be broken as can be avoided, and the new connections will be made with as small disturbance of communication as is practicable. The people of Hawaii are not violently breaking with their past. All that is good in that past they will endeavor to preserve and use, while they move on toward a more advanced political life, more assured liberties, more efficient administration and more free and prosperous activity.

This public verdict is overwhelmingly against the device of fractional voting. Very few such votes appear to have been cast. If we are correctly informed, there was only one ballot marked with fractions at the First Precinct of the Ser and District. The presumption is certainly against the propriety of such voting. No line, unless an arbitrary one, can be drawn where the minute sub-division of fractions should be disallowed. And yet small fractions of votes are obviously improper. The voter is permitted by the law to divide his votes as he chooses among the different candidates. But each vote is presumptively an indivisible unit, as much as each candidate is an indivisible man.

It is safe to say that no precedent has ever existed for such fractions of votes in any practice of cumulative voting elsewhere.

Our Portuguese fellow citizens have found themselves with considerable difficulty at the polls in the way they have managed to pump their votes solidly for their own two candidates and elect them. This successful combination of their forces is the more remarkable in that the most of them cannot read or write. They must have been well drilled to have heeded just how and where to mark a figure 3 against each of the two names of Viana and Fernandes on the Government ballots. Our Portuguese friends have proved themselves to possess no mean amount of efficiency for political action. It is evident that much account will have to be made of them in future political combinations in Hawaii.

A GREAT many local politicians are wondering to-day "where they are?" They may find consolation in the fact that Grover Cleveland himself is in the same quandary and is as far from the answer as common Honolulu people.

KOSUTH.

There are two especially noteworthy features in the career of Louis Kossuth, who died recently at the age of 92. The first is the great part he played in revolutionary history was due mainly, if not wholly, to his extraordinary gift of oratory. The second is that he built far better than he knew, for he never seemed able to recognize that the present self-government of Hungary is directly traceable to the splendid demonstration of the national resources, which he evoked in 1848.

A careful review of Kossuth's public life does not disclose the possession of any remarkable aptitude for statesmanship, much less of any striking military talent. Neither had he any hereditary claim to the exercise of influence in Hungary. Although belonging to the class of the minor nobility, he was poor and owed his education and early advancement to the patronage of those who discerned in him the germs of great abilities. He was not even of Magyar origin, but came from those southwestern Slavs who have always bitterly resented their subjection to the Hungarians. It is an interesting coincidence that the most famous of Hungarian patriots should have been by descent a Croat just as the most illustrious representative of France was a Corsican. How did it happen that an alien by birth, backed neither by wealth nor by a powerful family connection, had scarcely entered the Hungarian Diet in 1847 before he acquired an absolute mastery of that body? His qualifications were that his fellow-members beheld in him the incarnation of the national impulses and of the revolutionary spirit of the time, and that, beyond any of his countrymen, or, perhaps, any of his contemporaries, he had the power of moulding the beliefs and arousing the passions of men by eloquence. Those who yielded to his irresistible appeals to the brain and the heart at Buda-Pest, or who heard him plead the cause of Hungary in a foreign country and in a foreign language, felt themselves in presence of an orator capable of such amazing exploits as had been performed by Demosthenes in Athens, or by Mirabeau in the French States-General. The parallel is reasonably exact, for the most memorable services rendered by Kossuth to the Magyars were accomplished with the spoken word; not with the pen, as in the instance of Mazzini, nor with the sword, as in the case of Garibaldi. Considered as an organizer of military forces, he was scarcely superior to Gambetta; as a statesman, he ranked beneath Cavour; it was only in the senate house or on the platform that Kossuth stood forth preeminent.

To some fundamental shortcomings in his capacity for statesmanship, must be ascribed the irreconcilable attitude which he has maintained during the last twenty years of his life, and his vehement refusal to acknowledge that the dual system of Austria-Hungary, secured and made operative by Deak and Andrássy, had gained for the Magyars the full measure of national autonomy at which he himself had originally aimed. Had the Austrian Emperor carried out in good faith his concession of local self-government to the Hungarians, Kossuth would not have resorted to the desperate expedient of declaring the independence of his country. The actual Constitution of Hungary embodies larger rights than those the violation of which drove Kossuth into rebellion. During the last quarter of a century, not only have the Magyars exercised an absolute control over their own local affairs, and those of the people associated with them in the Trans-Leithan kingdom, but Hungarian statesmen have been preponderant in the imperial councils charged with the management of the collective interests of the dual monarchy.

That Kossuth should stubbornly have shut his eyes to the fulfilment of Magyar aspirations was the more surprising because, but for him and the proofs of national vitality and indestructibility which he had caused his countrymen to give, the Hapsburg Government would not subsequently have broken with its age-long traditions, with the whole programme of centralization, and made of Hungary a virtually independent State, united with the Cisleithan kingdom only by dynastic and federative ties. What he could

not do would not set, however, his own patent to his grateful countrymen. That is why they eagerly follow him to-day in Hungary. Out is who their will must on his later years in the soil which his restless enterprise, more than any other agent, has helped to liberate, by kindling in his countrymen an indelible passion to be free.

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April 25, 1894.

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